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THE MISSOURI CENTENNIAL AND BICENTENNIAL: HOW IT WAS, NOW AND THEN

Glynna Elliott Morse and Julia Morse

As we leave 2021, the bicentennial year of Missouri statehood, we can look back on how Missourians celebrated the Missouri Centennial 100 years before us. The Missouri Centennial was an elaborate state fair event held August 8-20, 1921, whereas the Missouri Bicentennial was organized by the Missouri Bicentennial Commission involving the State History Society and the Missouri State Parks Division to include all counties in the state with events occurring throughout the entire year of 2021.

Much of the Missouri Centennial celebration occurred in Sedalia, Missouri as part of the Missouri State Fair in 1921. There is currently no access to archived news reports from Sedalia, but newspaper reports from the nearby town of Windsor give us a record of the events.

The Windsor Review's first mention of the Missouri Centennial was in January 29, 1920 when it announced that the Missouri State Board of Agriculture had "unanimously agreed to celebrate at the State Fair in August, 1921 the 100th anniversary of Missouri becoming a state, with pageantry, a great homecoming of all living former Missourians and exhibits that will portray the magical progress made during the past century in agriculture, manufacturing, commerce, and education. "

The Sedalia Chamber of Commerce readily agreed to cooperate with the State Fair Board for the celebration to extend longer than previous state fairs and to work with plans to raise a fund for publicity and entertainment.

The Missouri Centennial selected a poster for the celebration of Missouri's 100th anniversary at the Missouri Centennial Exposition and State Fair. The winning poster was submitted by Vinnorma Shaw, a 31-year-old woman born in Kansas. Her poster entry featured a woman representing Missouri, a Native American, a buckskin frontiersman, and settlers with oxen teams--with Missouri's new (1917) capitol building in the background. The poster also included images of pavilions and flags representing the Missouri Centennial Exposition and State Fair, which was to take place in Sedalia, Missouri. Miss Shaw's Centennial poster was also included in some of the State Fair promotional flyers as well as other Missouri Centennial literature.

The Windsor Review reported on May 26, 1921 plans for the Joplin-Sedalia route, which was expected to have numerous cars coming through Windsor on the way to Sedalia. This route was being promoted by towns and businesses along the route with maps marking the towns. Plans were made to have 30,000 copies printed.

On June 16, 1921, the Missouri Centennial organizers summarized the plans for the celebration: "The Centennial Exposition to be held at Sedalia, August 8 to 20, in connection with the State Fair, will observe Missouri's 100th birthday with fitting ceremonies…. The history of our State will be made vital and concrete in the minds of the people, thus fostering patriotism and stimulating State pride." The article continued, "But the Centennial Exposition will do more than that. It will be a great showing of the accomplishments, resources and possibilities of Missouri. It will attract thousands of visitors—not only from Missouri, but from other states…. Visitors will go away impressed with the opportunities for development in Missouri."

By 1921, many people had automobiles. Most (but not all) of the Missouri state and U.S. highways were graveled and now had bridges, so auto travel was fairly common. For longer trips, many people still took the train. For the Centennial celebration and State Fair, the M.K.&T (the Katy) ran special fares with reduced rates for tickets for August 6 to 20.

The Missouri State Fair went all out for this special Centennial Exposition and State Fair. The Missouri State Fair had its inaugural opening in 1901, just 20 years before the Centennial. From the beginning, campgrounds were available at the Missouri State Fair, along with space for keeping their horses. Campgrounds were available in 1921; however, Sedalia had several hotels and other rooming accommodations.

After the Centennial Exposition & State Fair opened, the August 11, 1921 Windsor Review stated, "The State Fair opened at Sedalia Monday morning and record-breaking crowds have been attending. Autos from many states in a steady stream have passed through Windsor since last Saturday afternoon. The rain Wednesday morning doubtless cut down the attendance for that day. Those who have attended the fair this year say it far surpasses any ever held."

In addition to the special Centennial displays and events, the 1921 Missouri Centennial-Fair featured a spectacular pageant, budgeted at $50,000, to commemorate the event. The pageant's 600-foot set on the infield of the racetrack accommodated a cast of 5,000 persons and "exact replicas" of the pioneer Mississippi steamer, Zebulon M. Pike," and the first Missouri locomotive, "Pacific Number 1." In addition to local participants, professional actors were brought in for major roles, Pawnee Native Americans were recruited from Oklahoma, and professional dance troupes and four regiment of Missouri Guardsmen were integrated into the presentation. Two live buffalo lent realism. The 15 episodes in three acts of the pageant covered Missouri's history in three parts: (1) The first part displayed the primeval forests and the Mississippi River, where the Osage Indians camped and early French pioneers, LaSalle, Marquette, Joliet, Chouteau, and LaClede were part of early exploration and settlement. (2) The second part portrayed the struggle for statehood, admission to the union, and participation in the Mexican and Civil Wars. (3) The final part was a festival which featured Missouri's growth through commerce and transportation and an increased agricultural economy.

The social news in the Windsor Review gave the names of many families attending the State Fair, including relatives from elsewhere visiting locally before or after attending the Missouri Centennial Exposition & State Fair in Sedalia.

When the 1921 Missouri Centennial Exposition had begun, the First National Bank in Windsor advertised that it had a supply of "Centennial Half Dollars." Other banks in Missouri also offered the Missouri Centennial Half Dollars. This was a commemorative silver dollar authorized by Congress for the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia to make 250,000 copies for the Missouri Centennial observance. The front was an image of the bust of Daniel Boone in his coonskin cap. The reverse side was of Daniel Boone wearing his deerskin clothes, with his powder horn and rifle, directing the attention of an Indian to the West. The reverse side was inscribed with the words, "Missouri Centennial" and the name of Sedalia, where the centennial celebration was held. This year (2021) these coins appearing on eBay were priced from $245 to $645 per coin.

In preparing for this year's Missouri Bicentennial, Governor Parsons, on October 12, 2018, created the Missouri Bicentennial Commission to "aid the State Historical Society of Missouri" to plan for and implement the commemoration of the Missouri bicentennial…" Each county was urged to participate in the bicentennial celebration with an Ice Cream Social on August 10, 2021, the date of Missouri's admission to the union. Also, each county submitted a quilt square, which became the Missouri Bicentennial Quilt. That quilt was displayed in nearly every county during the year.
The Missouri Bicentennial organization developed an extensive online coverage of Missouri's history, timeline, and resources for teachers, students, and adults.

Towns and counties celebrated the 2021 Missouri Bicentennial in other ways. For example, Windsor celebrated with a Bicentennial Ice Cream Social hosted by the Windsor Historical Society and the local Henry County DAR Chapter. The Windsor Review had a weekly column using some of the facts from the Missouri Bicentennial Timeline as well as providing different programs and news articles about Missouri's bicentennial history and sponsoring a Bicentennial Poster contest for sixth graders.

Comparisons of the Missouri Centennial and the Missouri Bicentennial are difficult, considering the differences in media and transportation available in 1921 and 2021. Even with today's standards, the Missouri Centennial Pageant remains noteworthy. With the wide availability of online resources and traveling bicentennial exhibit, the 2021 Missouri Bicentennial reached a large population.

Sources:
(1) Windsor (MO) Review (Issues 1920-1921).
(2) Missouri State Archives.
(3) Missouri State Historical Society.
(4) "The Pageant of Missouri," Douglas County (MO) Herald, 4 August 1921.
(5) "Centennial Pageant," New Haven (MO) Leader, 11 August, 1921.
(5) Missouri 2021 Bicentennial, Missouri 2021.Org.
(6) "Residents' Day at the State Fair Centennial," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 9 August 1921.
(7) "To Be Historically Correct: Missouri's Best Recognized Historians Consulted About the Pageant," Bevier (MO) Appeal, 15 July 1921.
(8) "Model of the Centennial Pageant of Missouri Displayed at Sedalia," St. Louis Globe-Democrat, 03 Jul 1921.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Al Morse

I have been thinking about how I have observed and celebrated Christmas over the years of my life. I am not sure at what age I started remembering Christmas. I woke up one Christmas and saw a decorated tree with presents under it. I was probably about 3 or 4.

My parents, Albert Frank and Mildred Catherine (Janssens) Morse, always made Christmas special. There is a photograph of my brother, Carl, and me sitting on Santa's lap. Carl was a year and a half younger that me. We did not look any too happy in that picture.

But I certainly started getting excited about the coming of the Christmas season, especially when the Sears and Roebuck Christmas catalog came to us in the mail. I would sit for hours looking at and dreaming about all of these exciting toys. I had to choose carefully and hope for one that I thought Santa might bring to me.

Until I was about six, my dad would have Christmas day off from work. So Christmas was great. But he then started working in the Rich Hill, Missouri Power Plant. They produced the electricity and water for the city of Rich Hill. He worked seven days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. We then started enjoying the opening of Christmas presents on Christmas Eve.

After my grandparents, Clark Frank and Alma Dona (Miller) Morse, moved from the farm to a house in Rich Hill, Christmas Eve was celebrated at their house. Also. There would be uncles, aunts, and cousins there. We had soup and then exchanged gifts. We always had a name drawing. The adults had one drawing, and the cousins had another drawing. So we all had to buy a gift for that person. It was always a joyous evening.

After Dorothy Jean Newcomb and I were married on August 18, 1963, a new level of the Christmas season began. We lived in Independence, Missouri. We had our own Christmas on Christmas morning. We usually went to Rich Hill to see my parents and to the farm to see Dorothy's parents, Herbert Edgar and Dorothy (McDaniel) Newcomb. We usually went on a Saturday or Sunday before Christmas.

Of course, another change came in our Christmas season activities when our sons were born, Brian in 1967, and Steve in 1970. Their desires changed from year to year, and it was exciting to try to find and fulfill their wishes. We celebrated on Christmas morning. Steve always woke up first and would turn on the Christmas tree lights and quietly sit under the

tree admiring all that was there. When the rest of us got up, we enjoyed the opening of gifts. We still made trips to Rich Hill and to the farm to visit the grandparents, who relished their company.

Dorothy always baked and decorated dozens of cookies. These were given to their school teachers, Sunday School teacher, relatives, and friends. Our church had a quiet Christmas Eve time where people could come in and sit for prayers and then partake of communion. For several years, Dorothy played the organ for background music, and I, and sometimes our sons, would greet those who came in.

Our sons graduated from high school and then college. Since they went to the University of Missouri in Kansas City, they were always close by and would come to our house for Christmas Day. In 1994, Dorothy and I retired, and we moved to a house five miles west of Rich Hill. This opened another new way of celebrating the Christmas season. We lived across the road from Dorothy's cousin and her husband, Billy and Shirley (West) Tippie. Also Shirley's mother and Dorothy's aunt Hazel (Newcomb) West lived in Rich Hill. So there was always something going on at one of the houses or at the church in Rich Hill. The boys would come down there for Christmas.

When Steve married Kelly in 2001, and their two children, Wyatt and Owen, our grandchildren, were born, another new chapter in celebrating Christmas came upon us. We then began to go to Steve and Kelly's house for Christmas Day to celebrate and exchange gifts. A lot of joy and fun came from this, as we then had to start buying for children again. Of course, the grandsons are now 20 and 17 years old.

When Dorothy died in 2019, another new approach to celebrating the Christmas season came upon me. I do not bake as much as Dorothy did. She continued to bake dozens of cookies, even after we moved to Foxwood Springs, a retirement community, in Raymore, Missouri. We came here in 2008. Now Steve and his family do most of the baking. We will gather at their house again this year. Brian will pick me up and we will go to Prairie Village, Kansas.

Of course, the true meaning of Christmas was the birth of Jesus. I go to the Christmas Eve services at my church here in Raymore. We will also have a Christmas Eve service in the afternoon at Foxwood Springs. Brian helps the people at University Health Lakewood celebrate. He is the chaplain there. Steve sings in the church choir for Christmas Eve and Christmas Mass. I still love to celebrate Christmas.

THE YEAR WAS 2021

Marjorie Slavens

In the previous article, we looked back 100 years to what life was like and what major events occurred in 1921. Of course, the author of this article had to review the events of the year and make some choices about what would be included in her article. In this article, we will look at the current year, which will cease to exist on Friday evening, December 31, 2021. All of us have lived through this year, and we may not agree about what events should be included in this year end review. However, it seems that it would be worth the effort so we can preserve some of our experiences and our history for future generations.

In 1921, there was a presidential election in which Warren Harding was elected President of the United States. Women could vote for the first time in this country. The results of the election were not challenged, and the new President was inaugurated without challenge. Harding did not finish his term because of some corruption in his administration and his health, but he was legitimately elected and certified.

In 2021, we also elected Joseph R. Biden as our 45th President, but there has been a continuous challenge to this election in spite of the safeguards we have in our elections and the judgment of both committees and the courts throughout the country that there was no justification for these challenges to the process in the 2020 election. For the first time in our history, some Americans violently attacked our Capitol building; such an attack only occurred previously in our history when the British army attacked the Capitol during the War of 1812.

The major event of this year for so many of us is the continuation of Covid from 2020 to the present. We have benefitted from the years of research of the scientific community that provided them with the background needed to create the vaccines that have saved so many lives and have provided us with the opportunity to protect and defend ourselves against this terrible pandemic. The people who lived in 1921 and celebrated the Centennial of statehood had already lost many friends and family members to the terrible flu epidemic that began during World War I. They did not have the benefit of the extensive scientific research and communication with the public about that disease that we have now. One of my extended families had 7 children; the mother and three of her children died of the flu. In 1921, people would have rushed to be vaccinated if they had had the rapid delivery and accessibility that have helped us confront the Covid pandemic. Many of us can understand these challenges because we rushed to get smallpox vaccinations and polio shots when they were available, and they have protected us for so many years.

Covid continues to challenge us, in spite of the vaccinations. We are still wearing masks, and from time to time, our outside activity has to be limited by an increase in new versions of the disease. Many of us have lost friends and some have lost family members in spite of the existence and availability of vaccinations. I had Covid in November, but, since I had been vaccinated in February, I recovered; many people have not been so fortunate.

This has been a very difficult year for both students and teachers. Online learning has been available, but it has limited benefits, especially for younger children. Even in colleges and universities where computers are available, there are many challenges, especially when laboratory work is required.

Many workers have been able to do their jobs online from home, but interaction with other workers is frequently necessary. Many workers have lost their jobs during the pandemic and employers are challenged to hire new employees who have the skills required for the positions they have available.

Midwest Computer Genealogists has continued through our newsletters, which do not require personal interaction. We communicate by computer and share our research with our readers. This has been a very difficult process for Julia Morse, who teaches at Kansas State University and has had to adjust to all of the limitations generated by Covid when she sometimes cannot meet with her students in person. In spite of these challenges, she continues to research and write for our newsletter. Al Morse and I are both retired teachers, and we understand the challenges Julia and other teachers have had to face in 2021. It is to be hoped that 2022 will help us to return to our normal lives in our work and in our relationships with our families, friends, and fellow workers.

THE JONATHAN EPPRIGHT FAMILY

Marjorie Slavens

Before my mother, Mildred Welty Slavens, began her genealogical research, she knew very little about the family of her paternal grandmother, Catharine Mary Eppright Welty. Her father, Edward Alonzo Welty, told her his mother's maiden name was Eppright, but he gave no more information.

(The following information is from the *Jacob Eppright Family* book.)

Preface

"When I was growing up, I knew very little about my grandparents, Henry and Catherine Eppright Welty. I knew my grandfather was from Ohio and had served in the army during the Civil War. He died when I was six months old. In his last months, he lived in the Federal Soldiers' Home in Leavenworth, Kansas, where he died on June 14, 1911. My mother said he tried to come to Kansas City, Missouri to see me the week before his death, but my parents had taken me to Asbury, Missouri to see my other grandparents, Charles and Millie Kerr.

My grandmother, Catharine Eppright Welty, lived in Duval Township, Jasper County, Missouri all of her life, and she died there on November 22, 1928. I doubt that she had traveled much further than 20 miles from the house where she was born. Her parents, Jonathan and Eddy Meadows Eppright, were pioneers in the area, having moved to Jasper County about 1840 from Crawford County, Indiana.

Catharine Mary Eppright Welty was born in 1848 in Jasper County, Missouri. Her brother, George, was the first white child to be born in Duval Township, Jasper County in 1842. Her oldest brother, Marion, was born in Crawford County, Missouri while the family was on the way to Jasper County. Before the Civil War, there were very few families living in this area. When the war began, many of the people had to take refuge at Fort Scott, Kansas because there was so much military activity. Missouri was divided between northern and southern sympathizers, and life for the civilian population must have been very difficult. My grandmother's oldest brother, Marion, served briefly in the Kansas Cavalry. He was at Fort Scott, but he became ill and died of typhoid fever shortly after he enlisted. I do not know if the family was able to continue to live at home or if they also went to Fort Scott.

My grandfather, Henry Welty, went to Missouri to teach following his own Civil War military service. Catharine Eppright was one of his students. Since there was a great deal of military activity in the region during the Civil War, it is likely that there was no school during that period. She was still in school, although she was 17 years old when the war ended.

After their marriage on March 10, 1870, they bought land near her parents. They later sold this property and moved to another location not far from

there. My grandmother lived in this house until her death.

We visited my grandmother in the summer of 1925. We first visited Uncle Frank and Aunt Belle (Welty) near Stockton, Missouri and then went to the Welty farm. Grandma Welty lived there with her youngest son, Uncle George.

The house had a living room and bedroom on the first floor. It faced the west, and there was no porch on the front of the house. The living room was on the north side of the house, and the bedroom was on the south. When the house was first built, these were the only rooms. Behind the living room was the dining room. There was a porch along the side of the dining room. On the south side of the dining room and behind the bedroom was the kitchen. Between the door joining the dining room and the kitchen and the stairway was a pass-through window through which the food was passed from the kitchen. I was fascinated with this window because I had never seen anything like it. There were two bedrooms upstairs over the living room and the downstairs bedroom. The room on the north was the boys' bedroom with two beds, and the room on the south was the girls' room with one bed. It was very hot upstairs in the summer.

My mother said the Weltys ordered their first furniture for this house from Sears-Roebuck. In 1925, they had a telephone and were on a party line, where they answered the telephone according to the number of long and short rings that indicated their number. It was the best way they could communicate with their friends and neighbors since the roads were not good, and transportation was difficult when the weather was bad.

My father said the boys slept three across a bed. The Weltys worked hard on the farm, but with eight children, there was never enough money. My father said they took cold oatmeal to school for their lunch. They were helped by the money Henry Welty received from the estates of his grandmother, Elizabeth Brumback Miller, from his father, John Welty, and from the land in Tama County, Iowa which was originally purchased by his brother, David Welty, who died from injuries he suffered in the Civil War.

There was a fruit orchard on the side of the house. We picked apples there, but my mother said they were too green to eat. There was a barn, a wind mill, and a silo behind the house. Also behind the house, there was a small building where they processed their milk, separated the cream, and made their own butter. There was a fruit cellar where they stored their canned fruit.

The last time I visited the farm was in 1929 about seven months after my grandmother's death. I visited Aunt Josie, wife of Uncle George, my father's youngest brother, and my cousin, Eva Katherine. One of my friends who accompanied me that day had been a student of Aunt Josie, and Aunt Josie had lived with their family.

My genealogical work has told me much more than I ever knew about my grandparents. I knew my grandmother's maiden name was Eppright but very little more about her early years or her family.

I have traced the Eppright family back to my great great grandfather, Jacob Eppright, who came from Maryland to Tennessee and finally settled around 1840 in Johnson County, Missouri."

She published the following biography of her great grandfather, Jonathan Eppright on the USGenweb site, hoping she could make contact with other family members, and she was able to make some important Eppright contacts from that site. She placed three biographies, Jonathan Eppright, Henry Welty, and Charles Merlin Kerr on that site, and they are all still there.

JONATHAN EPPRIGHT

"Jonathan Eppright, son of Jacob Eppright and Catherine Wolf, was born October 12, 1812 in Washington County, Maryland. He was baptized November 3, 1812 at Zion Reformed Church, Hagerstown, Maryland, and his sponsors were Samuel Herr and Susanna

He married Edy Meadows on May 24, 1838 in Montgomery County, Indiana. Permission for her to marry Jonathan Eppright was given by her brother, John Meadows, and her sister-in-law, Mary Meadows. She was born in Indiana in 1823. Her

father was born in North Carolina, and her mother was born in Virginia.

Following their marriage, they moved to Jasper County, (then part of Crawford County) Missouri. Their first child, Marion, was born in Crawford County, Missouri in 1840.

Jonathan Eppright was the earliest male settler in Duval Township, Jasper County, Missouri. He arrived in March, 1840 and settled on section 1, lot 10, township 29, range 33. This land was entered from the government. Jonathan Eppright--W1/2 lot 6 NW1/2 and lot 5 NW1/2 Section 2 township 29, range 33 120 acres $1.25 an acre $150. paid Date July 20, 1853 Rec # 13493. Jonathan Eppright appears in the United States Census Report for Missouri in 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880. He served as a Justice of the Peace in 1866 and was a patron of the Atlas in 1876.

Jonathan Eppright died in May 1883 in Jasper County, Missouri. Edy Eppright married William Burns in 1885. She died around 1890.

Jonathan's children were: Marion, married to Nancy Vivion; George W.; Martha J., married to a Casey and then to George Crosson; Catharine Mary, married to Henry Welty; John H., married to Emma J. and Mary; Clarinda Ellen, married to John C. Scott; and Marinda A., married to Thomas Benton Redfern.

Jonathan Eppright and his wife, Edy, were among the first settlers in that part of Jasper County, Missouri. Their son, George, was the first white child born in Duval Township, Jasper County, Missouri. He was born March 29, 1842.

The first school was opened there in 1848. Catherine Eppright was born December 31, 1848.

Source: *Jacob Eppright Family* by Mildred Welty Slavens".

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Julia Morse, Website Administrator